

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)	
)	
Reexamination of the Comparative Standards for)	MM Docket No. 95-31
Noncommercial Educational Applicants)	
)	
Association of America's Public Television)	
Stations' Motion for Stay of Low Power)	
Television Auction (No. 81))	

COMMENTS OF WVRU-FM, RADFORD UNIVERSITY

WVRU-FM, Radford University ("WVRU"), hereby responds to the Commission's invitation to comment on the procedures the Commission should use to license "non-reserved" channels in which both commercial and noncommercial entities have an interest.¹ As explained in more detail below, WVRU is a noncommercial educational FM station that is licensed to Radford University and provides service to the New River and Roanoke Valley areas. WVRU is concerned about the lack of spectrum available exclusively for noncommercial educational ("NCE") entities and, accordingly, strongly encourages the Commission to adopt its proposal to continue to allow NCE entities to apply for non-reserved channels and frequencies.

I. BACKGROUND

Radford University has been providing continuous opportunities for citizens in the Roanoke Valley to gain local access to higher education since the early 1970's. However, in order for Roanoke Valley residents to receive the full benefit of Radford

¹ *In re* Reexamination of the Comparative Standards for Noncommercial Educational Applicants, *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, MM Docket No. 95-31, FCC 02-44 (rel. Feb. 25, 2002).

University's educational offerings, it is important for the university to extend WVRU's coverage into Roanoke.

There is no public 4-year educational institution in the Roanoke Valley that is within Radford University's primary service area. Therefore, in 1990, the Commonwealth of Virginia established the Roanoke Valley Graduate Center ("Graduate Center") in downtown Roanoke. Radford University, Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, Old Dominion University and Hollins University offered graduate level programs there. Enrollment at the Graduate Center quickly reached almost 1,000 adults per year. Then, in 1997, Radford University assumed a position of leadership in the planning process for the Roanoke Higher Education Center, a new entity created to serve the undergraduate needs of Roanoke Valley residents. That position remains today. Radford University currently leases over 7,000 square feet of classroom and office space in the Roanoke Higher Education Center and serves nearly 600 students, most of whom are adult learners.

Roanoke is also home to a large number of Radford University alumni, commuter and residential students, and many patrons of the university's private foundation.

WVRU has refocused its programming in a concerted effort to offer appealing programs to the general public. With program offerings from Public Radio International ("PRI"), as well as independently syndicated programs such as The Thomas Jefferson Hour, WVRU provides a fresh, balanced sound for public radio in the New River and Roanoke Valleys. WVRU is also a listening alternative for news, offering the British Broadcasting Corporation ("BBC") News Hour at 9 o'clock each weekday morning

followed by The Connection, a news call-in show touching on issues of the day. The BBC provides frequent news updates throughout the day and PRI's The World provides a full hour of news at 6 o'clock in the evening. WVRU also offers listeners BBC Overnight every night after midnight. This American Life, one of the most innovative programs on public radio across the country, airs at 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoons on WVRU. This American Life takes a multimedia approach to storytelling and is produced by Peabody award winner Ira Glass.

WVRU serves an important role in Radford University's educational opportunities. However, at its current power level, it is unable to serve much of the Roanoke Valley, despite the university's increasing academic presence in that community. Therefore, it is critical that the Commission allow WVRU the opportunity to apply for an FM translator station.

II. THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT RESERVED CHANNELS TO FILL THE NEEDS OF NONCOMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES

As the Commission noted in the NPRM, it currently reserves twenty channels (the "reserved band"), out of a total of one hundred channels, for FM full-power and FM translator NCE use.² This is an insufficient number of channels to satisfy the needs of all NCE entities. Consequently, NCE entities seeking to add a translator to their existing station or to add a new non-commercial voice to their community, must apply for stations on non-reserved channels.

The Commission's proposal to provide NCE entities with additional opportunities to reserve channels in the Table of Allotments³ is of no benefit to NCE entities applying for FM

² NPRM at ¶ 2.

³ See NRPM at ¶ 15.

translator stations because those stations are not included in the Table of Allotments. Therefore, WVRU strongly urges the Commission to adopt its proposal to allow NCE entities to acquire licenses for non-reserved channels when there is no conflict with commercial entities. Failure to adopt this proposal would result in NCE entities being unable to add translators to expand their existing station's coverage area, resulting in an inability of existing NCE stations to serve the needs of its community as the community grows in population and distance.

III. CONCLUSION

NCE entities provide valuable resources to their communities. The limited amount of spectrum reserved for NCE entities is insufficient to enable NCE entities to meet the growing needs of their communities. Furthermore, in certain types of stations, the ability of NCE entities to reserve commercial channels is not an option. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the FCC to allow NCE entities to apply for channels and frequencies in non-reserved spectrum.

Respectfully submitted,

WVRU-FM, Radford University

By: _____
William Yerrick
Director Radio/TV & Communication Services

Radford University
P.O. Box 6973
Radford, VA 24142
(540) 831-6059

April 15, 2002